

百人一句

100 people, 100 ku



On the first line appear the writer's name, kigo(=seasonal word)/ season, or <variant kigo>[<basic kigo>]/<season>. Sin'nen' is New Year's, Haru is Spring, Natsu is Summer, Aki is Autumn, Fuyu is Winter. The Japanese vowels a i u e o are pronounced as in Latin. A double vowel has double length. Doubled consonants are geminated as in Italian, the final n' is always given syllabic length. The realization of the consonants, for English ears, differs before the vowels i and u in the following cases: ti->chi, tu->tsu; di->ji, du->zu; hu->fu; si->shi, zi->ji.

--100 people 100 ku

This sample of 100 haiku by 100 authors is drawn nearly at random from the first 1000 of the 10000 haiku in The International Haiku Data Base.

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Preface

A "ku" is the shortest sequence of words equal to a complete thought. What is called haiku in the 20th century was originally hokku in the 17th century, the first or seed ku which gave rise to a series. It was the invention of Buddhist monks who combined Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist thought to devise a means whereby language can get nearest to saying what is real, and thereby free people from the worldly and vulgar. The hokku was defined as containing the empty and the actual, heaven and earth, host and guest, the going and returning. A letter or syllable called "kirezi" was used to "cut" or distinguish its two parts. The subject was a seasonal word representing a manifestation of nature in its cycle of the year.

Haikai is the practice of this method, which follows the natural changes that occur in all things in the phenomenal world, brings about the realization of the dharma realm, and reveals the principle of the limitlessness of things.

To make a haiku involves piercing through to the true nature of these seasonal words and in realizing their role in the larger scheme of the seasons. The words are placed in such order as to set up a polarity of forces such as is always existent in the universe. It is perhaps where these meet and oppose that the actuality that surpasses words can be grasped.

It takes a lifetime to see what a haiku is. The best and surest way to begin is to throw away all presuppositions about language and literature, and to learn from the haiku themselves.

古法眼



Tung-kuo-tze asked Chuang-tze,
"What is called the Tao, where is it?"
Chuang-tze replied, "Everywhere."
"Give an example."
"It is here in this ant."
"Give a lower instance."
"It is in the thick-growing grasses."
"Give a still lower instance."
"It is in this earthenware tile."
"What is its lowest instance?"
"In excrement."
To this Tung-kuo-tze gave no reply.

--from the writings of Chuang-tze.



元朝
 一塵
 机
 月草

Gessoo

Can'tyoo/Sin'nen'

Can'tyoo-no / iti-din' tome-nu / tukue kana

The first morning:
 not a speck of dust on
 the desk kana

The idea unit of the first line moves outwards to a material manifestation in the second line, and is resolved in the last. Kana is the particle synonymous to this resolution. Hai, or playfulness, is achieved with the help of kana: perhaps on other days of the year this desk looked less tidy.

傘
 か
 た
 む
 け
 て
 お
 降
 る
 詣
 で
 合
 ふ
 鶴
 女

Turudyo O-sagari [O-sagari] / Sin'nen'

O-sagari ya / kasa katamuke-te / moode-au

O-sagari ya

Slanted umbrellas

meet on a shrine visit.

O-sagari refers to rain or snow that falls during the first three days of the New Year. It is also called "prosperous New Year", and taken as an omen for good crops. Ya is the particle denoting the out-going force in a haiku. The rain causes umbrellas to appear, which are in complex motion in the second line, and are resolved in the word "meet" at the end. Holding an umbrella at a slight tilt is part of the graceful style of women in Japan, and this being the first visit of the year to a shrine we must imagine the beauty of their silk kimonos.

帯結ぶ
 背を向ける
 初鏡
 キミコ

Kimidyo Hatu-kagami/Sin'nen'

Obi musubu / se-wo muke-ni keri / hatu-kagami

To tie the obi,
the back was turned keri

First mirror.

First mirror: the first time in the New Year that one uses the mirror to dress, hence, the mirror on New Year's morning. The obi is a separate sash for the kimono, more than 2 meters in length, that is wound around the waist a few times and tied in different styles in back. The materials and widths will differ with each season. This ku begins with a small, ordinary act, and moves to a motion of the entire body. Keri has essentially the same role as kana, but comes after a verb. The last line contains the largest thought unit of the three and is motionless, making a polarity with the idea of the first line.

音 嫁
 雪 君
 華 声

Yooka Yome-ga-kimi/Sin'nen'

Yome-ga-kimi-no / oto yaya huke-te / yuki-no koe

Yome-ga-kimi's
 sound; as it grows later,
 the snow's voice.

The two sounds are the actual (mouse) and the empty (snow). Yome-ga-kimi, the name for a mouse in the New Year period, originated out of respect for one of the Gods of Good Fortune, whose messenger is the mouse. Originally written with characters that mean "night eyes", the character was changed to that which stands for "bride", as they are phonetically the same. Respect for all things is an essential characteristic of haiku.

魚の眼も
 波蔭也
 玉の春
 紅葉

Kooyoo Tama-no haru[Hatu-haru]/Sin'nen'

Nami-kage ya / uo-no manako-mo / tama-no haru

Wave shadows ya
 Fish eyes too are
 Jewelled Spring.

Tama-no haru: one of the terms used to express the auspiciousness of the New Year. By the lunar calendar the New Year coincided with the beginning of Spring so that the terms mi-yo-no haru, kami-no haru, kimi-ga haru, tama-no haru, which are related to the emperor, the empire, the gods and the absolute original purity of things such as the jewel, are all New Year kigo. The jewel, specifically, the pearl, as the embodiment of perfection is a concept not alien to English poetry.

蓬 菜
海 老
を
こ
は
す
子
供
が
い
城
泉

Zyoosen' Hoorai/Sin'nen'

Hoorai-no / ebi-wo kowagaru / kodomo kana

Horai's

big prawn they're afraid of,

the children kana

A very large prawn with all its tentacles intact is sometimes on the tray that depicts Hoorai, the island of immortals, one of the auspicious decorations for New Year's.

年
玉
や
か
ち
か
ち
山
の
本
一
つ
青
々

Seisei Tosi-dama/Sin'nen'

Tosi-dama ya / Katikati yama-no / hon' hitotu

The year's jewel ya
Kachikachi Mountain's
book, one volume.

Katikati Yama: an ancient children's tale about a badger that ate an old woman, and a rabbit that requites the wrong. Tosi-dama: a small gift given to children on New Year's morning. These days it is usually monetary.

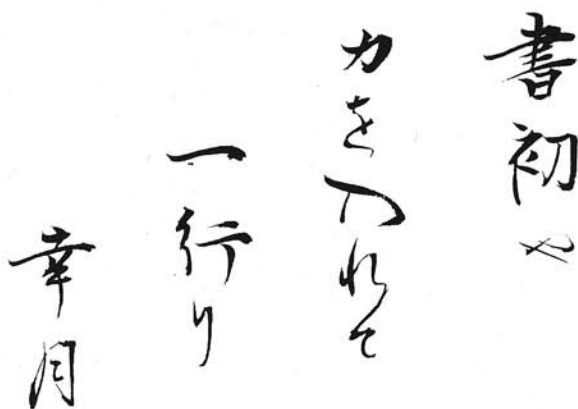


Koodai Saru-hiki[Saru-mawasi]/Sin'nen'

Saru-hiki-no / saru-to soroi-no / tyan'tyan'ko

The monkey trainer
and his monkey, matched
wadded vests.

The monkey trainer led a monkey or carried it on his back and went from door to door during the New Year period, like the travelling comic dancers (man'zai), to pray that evil spirits would go away (saru, monkey, also means to go away) and that the household would flourish. As the monkey was considered the guardian of horses, in the old days the monkey trainer went particularly to the warrior and farmer household stables to perform, praying for the health of the horses. In this ku, as though father and son, their vests are of the same pattern.



Koogetu Kaki-zome/Sin'nen'

Kaki-zome ya / tikara-wo ire-te / hito-kudari

First writing ya
Strength put in,
one line goes down.

The first time one writes with the brush and inkstone in the New Year. All of the activities one engages in for the first time in the year are done carefully because the general direction and tendencies for the entire year are believed to be predictable from them. In the second line we feel the force of the action itself, in the third we see the brush go down the page.

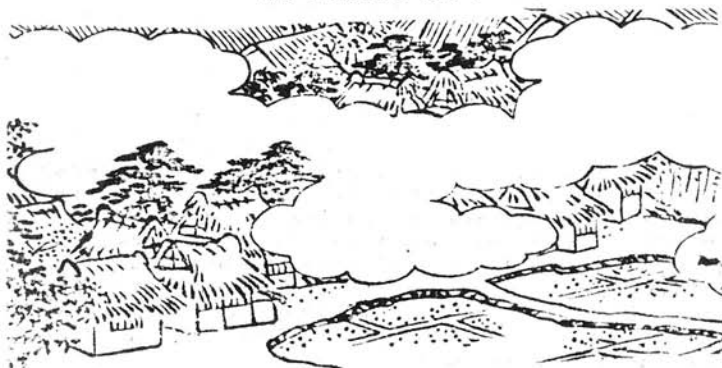
峠より
見おろす村の
霞ムケリ
鶴巢

Kakusoo

Kasuma[Kasumi]/Haru

Tooge-yori / mi-orosu mura-no / kasumi keri

From the mountain pass
looking down, the village
was misted keri



お
 涅槃
 の
 風

老
 ども
 ち
 に

大
 文
 字

だ
 い
 も
 ん
 の

Daimon'zi

O-nehan'[Nehan'-el]/Haru

Oi-doti-ni / o-nehan'-no kaze / nakanaka-ni

To the aged company,
 the Nirvana day wind
 is no joke.

Lunar 2nd Month 15th day, when the last historical Buddha Sakyamuni entered Nirvana, all Buddhist temples hold a special service. An image, either a large statue or a painting of the Buddha lying on his right side, is put on display, and many people will make a special pilgrimage to pay respects. The word in the last line means extreme, or very hard. It gives the very feel of the cold wind on the old people as they hobble along, determined to fulfill their mission.

波
 に
 底
 春
 射
 砂
 九
 起
 水
 す
 陽
 ？

Kyuuki Haru-no midu/Haru

Soko-suna-no / siwa-ni sasu hi ya / haru-no midu

The sand at bottom,
 on its ripples strikes the sun ya
 Springtime water.

The special quality of water in the Spring is its abundance, brought about by the thawing of snow and the frequency of rain. The Japanese have always been careful and factual in noting the distinct characteristics of things from one season to the next, and indeed in studying haiku one can become aware of these facts. In Autumn that begins the in-going part of the year cycle, the water takes on less motion, more clarity and chill.

山寺に
 蒟蒻賣や
 春寒し
 鬼城

Kizumeo

Haru samusi/Haru

Yama-dera-ni / kon'nyaku-uri ya / haru samusi

At a mountain temple

a konyaku seller ya

Spring is cold.

Kon'nyaku: a jellied paste made from the root of devil's tongue (arrow root). It is sliced and used commonly in cold weather dishes, and is an important ingredient in vegetarian temple cooking.

子
 供
 ら
 の
 も
 の
 紐
 に
 干
 す
 春
 の
 雁
 は
 ら
 め

Hazime Haru-no kari/Haru

Kodomo-ra-no / mono himo-ni hosu / haru-no kari

The children's
things hung out on a cord;

Spring wild geese.

This means wild geese that have not yet returned North, or those that remain because they are not well enough to go. The thought units in the first two lines are Spring-like and homely. With the last line, the ku opens up to the expanse of land and sky.

一
和

 松
の
花

 石
垣
高
し

 舊
城
の

Itiwa Matu-no hana/Haru

Kyuuzyoo-no / isi-gaki takasi / matu-no hana

The old castle's
 stone wall is high,
 pine tree flowers.

The flowers of the pine tree are barely
 noticed when they bloom, male and female
 flowers on one tree. It is the male flower
 scattering its pollen, yellowing the ground
 underneath, that draws attention to them.

春水
 盪
 に
 映
 了
 軒
 七
 猫
 夕
 陽

Sekiyoo Syun'sui[Haru-no midu]/Haru

Syun'sui ya / tarai-ni uturu / noki-no neko

Spring water ya

In the tub is mirrored

the cat in the eaves.

The snow melting, the earth softens with a general increase of water that has a quality of growing mildness compatible with the season. Some of that water drawn in a wooden tub, happens to reflect this homely scene which in itself contains the calm and playful characteristics of Spring.

あ
る
時
は
雲
雀
の
和
す
茶
摘
唄
歸
去
來

Kikyorai

Tya-tumi-uta[Tya-tumi]/Haru

Aru toki-wa / hibari-no wa-suru / tya-tumi-uta

And now

a skylark joins in
the tea-pickers song.

A line by line time-space-motion construction, in which two different sounds interplay. On the 88th day from Spring Begins (by the Chinese calendar), or the end of April or so, begins the picking of tea, which continues for two weeks. The tea picked on the 88th day is considered to be a medicine for long life. Young maidens with wicker hats would go out in groups and sing as they picked.

泥
す
影
の
動
か
ぬ
蛙
か
な
規

Siki Kawadu/Haru

Doro sumi-te / kage-no ugoka-nu / kawadu kana

As the mud settles,
its motionless reflection,
a frog kana

The movement is from the mud at the bottom of the pond upwards. Compared with the old pond haiku of Basyoo's this one of Siki's may be interpreted as a modest, less effective solution to haiku. In view of his attempt to revive the haiku, however, there is great force in what is said here. When the mud settles, a clear reflection will appear.

蚕
眠
て
 牛
に
草
刈
り
 日
暮
か
し
 一
路

Itiro Kaiko/Haru

Kaiko nemut-te / usi-ni kusa karu / higure kana

The silkworms asleep,
 cut grass for the ox;
 dusk of day kana

Although cultivation goes on through Summer and Autumn, silkworm is a Spring dai as it is then that the eggs hatch and mulberry leaves open up. Once the insect has developed from the egg stage it is a voracious eater, needing a constant supply of mulberry leaves. After it passes 3 days or so of eating and brief rests, it "goes to sleep", during which time it matures. Compared to the demanding silkworms, cows and oxen are patient creatures. Their needs are seen to during a lull in mulberry leaf gathering.

豆腐屋の荷に
 落ちたるも
 雨の椿
 一枝

Issi Ame-tubaki[Tubaki]/Haru

Toohu-ya-no ni-ni / oti-taru mama ya / ame-tubaki

On the tofu man's load,
 just as they had scattered,
 rainy camellias.

The pure, precipitated protein from soybeans is made into a light and silky white cake called toohu, which was part of the daily diet in the old days, most commonly sliced into the breakfast soup. The toohu man used to be up before dawn each day to make and bring these beancurd cakes from door to door. The camellia, urged by the rain to fall, enhances the colour of the load. In Japanese, nouns can modify nouns rather freely. Here the word ame (rain) is attached to the kigo; these compounds have been retained as variations on the kigo.

草餅や
 黄粉汚れの
 子等の顔
 嶺兆

Reityoo

Kusa-moti/Haru

Kusa-moti ya / kinako-yogore-no / ko-ra-no kao

Grass cakes ya

Smeared with bean flour,
 the children's faces.

These rice cakes are made with the addition of finely ground mugwort to the rice flour. Inside is a filling of sweet boiled red beans, and outside they are dusted with a powdering of soybean flour.

蚪蚪
 皆
 同
 方
 向
 浮
 玉
 名
 子

Gyokumeisi

Otamazyakusi/Haru

Otamazyakusi / mina onazi hoo-ni / mui-te uku

Tadpoles--

all in the same direction

turned, float.

A good example of a ku with no haiku particles, which implies that their space is to be taken up by words that play the same role as the particle would have. In this ku, the concept of the emergence of tadpoles is the outgoing force, and the last word "uku", to float, has the soft, receding effect of kana.

燈籠に
 ほのかなる
 庭の
 桜
 東南

Tocho Niwa-zakura [Sakura] / Haru

Tooroo-ni / honoka-naru hi ya / niwa-zakura

In the stone lantern
 a faint light ya
 Garden cherry flowers.

The light in these lanterns was pale
 because the wick burning in a dish of oil was
 protected from the wind with paper pasted
 over the openings. The faint glow is just
 enough to render the colour of the blossoms a
 special interest in the night. Note how from
 line to line the ku opens out into space.

薄月夜
折々花の
ちら見えそ
三亥

San'gai Hana/Haru

Usu-dukiyo / oriori hana-no / tiru mie-te

Pale moon night;
now and then a petal
can be seen to fall.

In haiku if only hana is said, it is understood to mean cherry flowers. Someone has come to see the blossoms at night and is sitting under a tree. From the large, all-pervading night we get the more particular petals; the movement is from up to down.

遊
蛙

降
り
し

あ
た
り
に
鶴
の

田
打
す

Yuua Ta-uti su[Ta-util/Haru

Ta-uti suru / atari-ni turu-no / ori-te ki-si

Where they plough a ricefield,
nearby, cranes
have descended.



夕月や
 谷の水田に
 鳴く蛙
 春青

Syun'sei Kawadu/Haru

Yuu-duki ya / tani-no midu-ta-ni / naku kawadu

Dusk moon ya

In the valley's water ricefields

frogs sing.



山
の
影
畑
に
人
に
伸
び
来
し
青
楓

Seihuu

Hata utu[Hata-util/Haru]

Yama-no kage / hata utu hito-ni / nobi-te ki-si

The mountain's shadow--
to the man hoeing the field
it stretched and came.



二足了
目刺竹なり
野の晝餉
祿易

Rokui Mezasi/Haru

Ni-hiki-dutu / mezasi wake-tari / no-no hiruge

Two apiece,
the mezashi skewer divided,
moorland lunch.

Mezasi: "pierced through the eyes", is the term for sardines strung on a bamboo stick, salted and dried. They are then grilled over a fire and eaten.

龍尾
 春の宵
 訪
 句の友を

Ryunubi

Haru-no yoi/Haru

Ku-no tomo-wo / tadune-te yuku ya / haru-no yoi

A ku friend,
 go to visit ya
 A Spring night.



鷺
白

風
寒
、

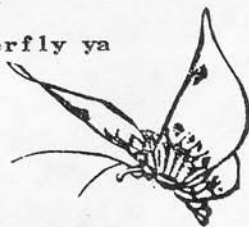
は
な
れ
ぬ
蝶
、

山
吹
を

Rohaku Yamabuki/Haru

Yamabuki-wo / hanare-nu tyoo ya / kaze samuki

From the yamabuki
it won't part, the butterfly ya
The wind is cold.



This bush is the *kerria japonica*, which grows thickly and blooms forth with golden flowers. The butterfly is no doubt seeking protection against the wind.

		つ	芥
	田	そ	の
	螺	上	根
	か	り	に
芳	ふ	し	
枝			

Hoosi

Tanisi/Haru

Seri-no ne-ni / tui-te agari-si / tanisi kana

To the cress root
 clinging, up came
 a water snail kana

The water snail is a blue-black colour, found in ricefields, hence its name, literally, "ricefield spiral shell". It is considered to have a wonderful flavour reminiscent of the fields and plains. This person was probably gathering wild cress. The spontaneity of the ku makes the water snail come to life.

耕雪
 風薫る
 銀鈴
 簾の紐に

Koosetu

Kaze kaoru[Kun'puu]/Natu

Su-no himo-ni / gin'rei kake-si / kaze kaoru

To the cord of the sudare
a silver bell is tied.

Scented breeze.

Sudare are blinds made of slits of green bamboo or dried reeds, used at windows or doors to keep out the sunlight, yet allow the breezes through. The freshness and elegance of this ku is very true to the dai, which refers to the early Summer breeze that is perfumed with the young green of trees and grasses.



Tooru

Musi-bosi/Natu

Musi-bosi ya / huta-ma toosi-te / Han'nya Kyoo

Insect airing ya
 Going through two rooms,
 the Prajna Sutra.

This is most likely the longer Prajna
 Paramita Sutra which covers many volumes of
 the traditional folding, or accordian type
 of books. The five wisdom sutras would
 probably cover the area of more than two
 rooms if spread out.

夏
の
朝
雨
に
花
鬼
灯
に
楽
天

Rakuten'

Natu-meku/Natu

Natu-meku ya / hana-hooduki-ni / asa-no ame

Summery ya

On jack-o-lantern flowers,
the morning rain.

The English name for this plant (physalis alkekengi) points to the fruit with its orange-red calix. The flowers, which appear in early Summer, are white, small and modest, resembling those of the eggplant to which this plant is related.

大島薄く
見えて濁りぬ
夏の海
月舟

Gessyuu

Natu-no umi/Natu

Oosima usuku / mie-te nigori-nu / natu-no umi

Oshima faintly
could be seen in the muddied
Summer ocean.

There are any number of islands named Oosima in the seas around Japan. The best known is perhaps the largest of the seven Izu islands. It has an active volcano and in the past was a place of banishment.

躑躅

行水女

手拭白し

背へまはす

Tutuzi Gyoozui-me[Gyoozui]/Natu

Se-e mawasu / tenugui sirosi / gyoozui-me

Swung round her back

the towel is white;

tub-bath lady.

In the gathering dusk, the lady is a dim figure, but the towel is clearly seen. As Summer advances, the steamy heat of the public bathhouse is not attractive and so people would put a large tub in the garden, fill it with hot water and bathe out there leisurely. This is called gyoozui.

短夜々
 茄子に恋する
 芋の蔓
 泊雲

Hakuun' Midika-yo/Natu

Midika-yo ya / nasu-ni koi-yoru / imo-no turu

Short nights ya

On the eggplant amorously leans

the potato vine.

The vine mentioned is a form of sweet potato belonging to the morning glory family. In literature and in art a vine represents lust in the female and a purple band around a young man's head used to indicate one in love. A very droll mingling of these matters with the short night.

吹
 ぬ
 け
 た
 簾
 に
 沈
 む
 金
 魚
 かな
 芒
 月

Boogetu Kin'gyo/Natu

Hukare-taru / sudare-ni sidumu / kin'gyo kana

At the wind-blown
 sudare they dive down,
 goldfish kana

The goldfish bowl is placed just inside
 the window over which a bamboo blind has been
 hung. When a breeze comes and the blind
 swings, the effect is seen in the behaviour
 of the goldfish.

飛 物
 今 昔
 青 嵐
 あ じ
 い

Aoi Ao-arasi/Natu

Mono-ga mina / ton'-de simai-si / ao-arasi

Everything
 has been sent flying;
 green gale.

Ao-arasi is an old poetical expression
 that means a fairly strong wind that blows
 through green Summer grasses and trees.

城山
 幟
 五月
 花菱子

Karyoosi

Gogatu/Natu

Siro-yama-ni / nobori-no tati-si / gogatu kana

On Castle Mountain,
 banners are standing,
 Fifth Month kana

For the lunar Fifth Month 5th day, Boys' Festival, large carp banners or war pennants are put up by families with boy children, as symbols of manly virtue. These make a colourful sight over a period of a few weeks. This ku seems to be referring to Siro-yama in Kagosima where Saigoo Takamori made his last stand in the revolt against the imperial government around 1877, and so these banners have a special poignancy.

近道
 教
 草
 初女

Hatudyo

Kusa sigeru/Natu

Tika-miti-to / osowari-tare-do / kusa sigeru

A short-cut,
 I was told, but
 the grasses are thick.

It was a short cut, before the Summer
 rains caused the grasses to become overgrown.



雨宿り
しそるまへ
蟻
数下

Suuzuyu

Hikigaeru/Natu

Ama-yadori / si-te iru mae-no / hikigaeru

Shelter from the rain

being taken; in front,

a toad.

Even sheltering under one tree is said
to be due to a connection in a former life.
Compare Issa's ku:

木の蔭で蝶と宿ると他生の縁

Ko-no kage ya/ tyoo-to yadoru-mo/ tasyoo-no
en' [Tree shade ya/ To rest there with a
butterfly, that too/ a former life's karma.]

丑
 の
 日
 を
 鰻
 魚
 に
 水
 管
 通
 じ
 ぬ
 べ
 し
 云

Kyokuun' Unagi/Natu

Ushi-no hi-wo / materu unagi-ni / kakei-midu

For the day of the Ox
 these eels are waiting;
 bamboo conduit water.

The day of the Ox that falls during the
 hottest period before Autumn Begins, is when
 broiled eels should be eaten to keep in good
 health. Water through a bamboo conduit is
 spring water and therefore fresh and cold.
 The special care given to the creatures
 before they pass on to fulfill their
 functions for man.

鹽
 ,
 湯
 玩
 弄
 金
 魚
 浮
 い
 っ
 ち
 あり
 白
 水

Syakusui

Gan'roo-no kin'gyo[Uki-nin'gyool/Natu

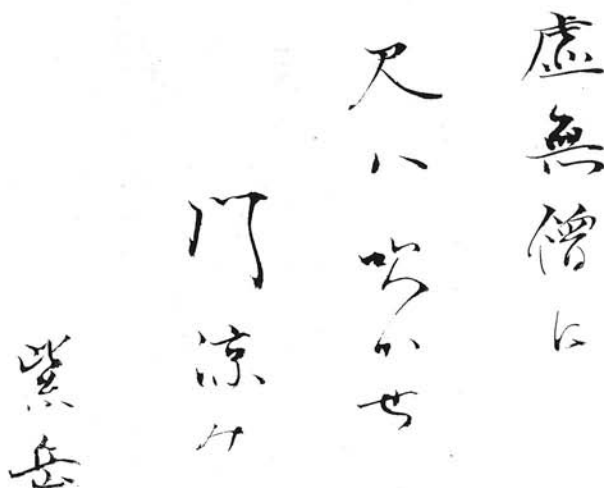
Tarai-no yu / gan'roo-no kin'gyo / ui-te ari

The tub's hot water;

a celluloid goldfish

afloat in it.

This is probably a wooden tub in which a child was or will be bathing outdoors. The kigo is "floating dolls"; often as in this ku another related word is used in place of the kigo.



Sigaku Kado-suzumi[Suzumi]/Natu

Komusoo-ni / syakuhati hukase / kado-suzumi

Have the komuso
blow the shakuhachi;
cool off at the gate.

Komusoo were monks of the Hoke sect of Zen', a special school only open to people of the samurai class. Up till the 19th century only these monks were allowed to play the syakuhati (a bamboo flute one syaku 8 sun' in length), as it was considered to be an instrument of the dharma. The komusoo wore a white kimono, kesa, and a deep wicker hat that covered the entire face. Carrying a begging bowl, they walked through the country, stopping at every gate to chant a gatha. When an offering was received of food or coins, they would then play a short piece on the syakuhati.

遠くより
店を守りて
涼み
吾
年

Huhei Suzumu[Suzumi]/Natu

Tooku-yori / mise-wo mamori-te / suzumi keri

From a distance
he kept an eye on the store,
and cooled off keri

This sounds like a small country store.
There have been no customers for a while,
and the shopkeeper has strolled out for a few
minutes to cool off. He still keeps a
look-out for customers, however.

風鈴
 深
 静
 まつた
 京
 の
 町
 東
 風

Toohuu Huurin' / Natu

Huurin' ya / ne-sidumat-taru / kyoo-no mati

Windbell ya

Asleep and grown quiet,
a district of the capital.

Windbells come in many shapes and sounds. They are an elegant, old fashioned way of feeling cool. Hung under the eaves, usually at one or more corners of the house, their soft tinkle, the sign that there is a breeze, is wonderfully cooling.

夏草
 世に捨てられし
 石地藏
 鳴雪

Meisetu

Natu-gusa/Natu

Natu-gusa ya / yo-ni sute-rare-si / isi-Dizoo

Summer grasses ya

Forgotten by the world,

a stone Jizo.

Dizoo is the Japanese name for Ksitigarbha (Earth-womb), the Bodhisattva of the Roads, guardian deity for children, said to be an avatar of Amida Buddha. He is represented in the form of a monk, and statues of him, usually made of stone, are found by the sides of roads. In this ku the grasses have grown almost so as to cover him.

兎
 片耳垂り
 大暑
 龍之介

Ryuunosuke

Taisyo/Natu

Usagi-mo / kata-mimi taruru / taisyo kana

Even the rabbit's
 one ear droops down,
 great heat kana

"Great Heat, the hottest period of the
 year, falls in the middle third of the lunar
 Sixth Month.



五蘊
 空
 暑
 淡高

Tan'syun

Atusa[Atusil]/Natu

Go-un' mina / kuu-to ie-domo / atusa kana

The five skandha all

empty, they say, but

the heat kana

The five skandha: components of a being--phenomenal form (related to the 5 sense organs), reception (sensation), conception (discerning), action (process of mind related to like and dislike, good and bad, etc.), cognition (perception). The phrase "the five skandha all empty" is from the shorter Prajna Paramita sutra, memorized by all.

文
雪

丹
風
呂
二

行
水
や
々

秋
迄

Bun'setu

Aki tikasi/Natu

Aki tikasi / gyoozui yame-te / mati-buro-ni

Autumn is near;

Quit the tub baths, go
to the town bathhouse.

As the evenings get cooler one sees that
it is again time to bathe indoors.
Especially in the cities it was not usual for
everyone to have a bath in his own house,
and every few blocks one can still find a
public bathhouse.

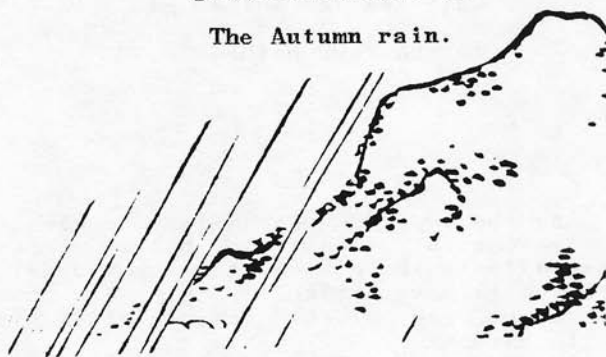
其月
秋
雨
青
き
胡
瓜
枯
蔓

Kigetū

Aki-no ame/Aki

Kare-turu-no / aoki kyuuri ya / aki-no ame

Withered vines'
green cucumbers ya
The Autumn rain.



風
 吹
 け
 ば
 廻
 り
 仕
 掛
 っ
 茶
 山
 子
 かな
 石
 柳

Sekiryuu

Kakasi/Aki

Kaze huke-ba / mawaru sikake-no / kakasi kana

When a wind blows,
 he turns round, that's how he's made,
 the scarecrow kana



千
 衰
 に
 影
 折
 々
 下
 秋
 の
 蝶
 北
 江

Hokukoo

Aki-no tyoo/Aki

Hosi-mino-ni / kage oriori su / aki-no tyoo

On the airing straw coat
 a shadow falls now and then:
 Autumn butterfly.

The expression "hosi-mino" means a straw raincoat put out to dry". A typical country scene after some rains and the air takes on the clearness particular to Autumn. The simplicity of the words is the first way by which one can enter into the realm of haï, but that realm can be grasped only by freeing the mind of its habitual limitations and allowing the words to take their real force.

秋耕に
 雲なき午後
 けり
 芳石

Kin'seki

Syunkoo/Aki

Syunkoo-ni / kumo naki gogo-to / nari-ni keri

At the Autumn ploughing,
 a cloudless afternoon
 it got to be keri

A quintessential episodic constituent of
 human experience: Aha, it turned out to be
 fine weather after all! A convergence of
 becoming from the uncertainty of the morning
 at the plough to the immediate fulfillment of
 a sky without clouds as the day progressed.

陽の残る
五重の塔や
群とほは
樵人

Syooto Mure-ton'bo[Ton'bo]/Aki

Hi-no nokoru / go-zyuu-no too ya / mure-ton'bo

The sunlight lingers
on the five-storied pagoda ya

Throng of dragonflies.



The swarming dragonflies as well as the lingering light show that it is sunset. In the earliest Japanese chronicles, Japan is called the Island of the Autumn Insect, i.e. the dragonfly, because it appears in the ricefields in abundance if the Summer weather has been good; it has naturally been the symbol of rich harvests.

朝顔
青ばかり
今日も又
新生死

Sin'syoozi

Asagao/Aki

Asagao-no / ao bakari-nari / kyoo-mo mata

Morning glories,
only in blue
again today.



We are waiting in expectancy for pink, white, or red morning glories to show themselves. Blue today again is nice, however. Effortlessness and no pretenses to saying anything important are good qualities of a haiku; these serve to bring out the life of the seasonal word itself.

開
 庵
 の
 障子
 萩
 の
 花
 和
 女

Kazudyo Hagi-no hana[Hagi]/Aki

Ai-te iru / io-no syoozi ya / hagi-no hana

They are all open,
 the hut's shoji ya
 Bush clover.

It is not yet very cold when the bush clover bloom, and the Japanese are very fond of looking at them in their tangled disorder with boughs hanging downwards and the little flowers at their tips. Syoozi, sliding door frames that are pasted with paper, open the room to a veranda which looks out on the garden. To facilitate the view the Japanese throw these doors wide open in spite of the cold. The first line applies both to the doors and to the blossoms.

降
 り
 出
 て
 、
 間
 も
 漏
 る
 音
 秋
 の
 雨
 徂
 春

Sosyun' Aki-no ame/Aki

Huri-ide-te / ma-naku moru oto / aki-no ame

It starts to pour and
 in no time the sound of a leak,
 Autumn rain.

The somewhat dilapidated dwelling, the
 tatteredness of clothing, the simplicity of
 food, are conditions accepted and turned
 favourably into "hai".



あさあさ
毛蟲の衰
露衣
紅緑

Kooroku

Tuyu-goromo[Tuyu]/Aki

Asana-asana / kemusi-no mino-no / tuyu-goromo

Morning after morning
the caterpillar's straw coat,
a dewy garment.

The word for caterpillar in Japanese is made of two ideograms, fur insect. The writer is playfully taking this fur as a straw raincoat, and on top of that, as a dewy straw raincoat.

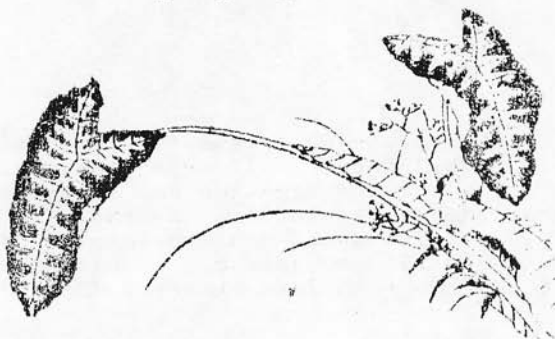
芋虫
面憎き迄
太りけり
鬼月

Togetu

Imomusi/Aki

Imomusi-no / omo nikuki-made / hutori keri

The potato bugs'
faces to a hateful extent
got plump keri



月
 の
 夜
 は
 ち
 づ
 黒
 か
 り
 き
 曼
 珠
 沙
 華
 青
 桐

Seidoo

Man'zyusyage/Aki

Tuki-no yo-wa / tada kurokari-ki / man'zyusyage

On a moonlight night

they're only black,

manjushaka.

The more common name for this red flower is Higan'-bana, *licoris radiata*. They appear along the roadside on embankments by ricefields punctually around the Autumn equinox. The name man'zyusyage comes from the Sanskrit manjusaka, a flower the Gods are said to rain down whenever they wish.

石雨すぎし
 夜の曇り
 梅月

Baigetu

Koorogi[Koorogi]/Aki

Koorogi ya / isi-ame sugi-si / yo-no kumori

Crickets ya

After the pelting rain,
 night cloudiness.



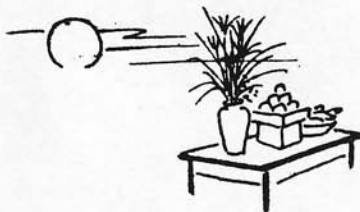
月
 の
 縁
 影
 さ
 ま
 ざ
 ま
 に
 供
 物
 玉
 城

Oozyoo Tuki-no en' [Tuki-mil/Aki

Tuki-no en' / kage samazama-ni / sonae-mono

Moon veranda;
 shadows of all kinds--
 the offerings.

Moon veranda means the veranda that
 people are sitting out on, viewing the moon.
 The custom was to put out a tray of offerings
 to the full moon of Autumn.



蕩
 皇
 泳
 水

Tootoo Inago/Aki

Midu-ni oti-te / oyogi-some-taru / inago kana

Fallen into the water,
 he's begun to swim,
 grasshopper kana

Beginning with an action, this ku is
 resolved in its subject, the grasshopper.
 As everything contains both aspects of ya and
 kana, a limitless number of ku can be
 written about the same subject in different
 aspects.



作
ぬ
ど
菊
咲
に
けり
折
り
に
けり
漱
石

Sooseki

Kiku/Aki

Tukurane-do / kiku saki-ni-keri / ori-ni keri

Untended, still
the chrysanthemums bloomed,
were picked keri



秋晴
酒藏前
桶洗
左衛門

Saemon' Aki-bare/Aki

Aki-bare-no / kura-mae hirosi / oke-arai

Autumn clear weather;
at the wide warehouse-front,
washing wine-tubs.

Getting ready for the new rice wine that
will be brewed when the harvest of rice is
in.

		稲	香
	つ	架	久
	き	の	山
藤	け	径	へ
湖	り	す	

Tooko Hazal Ine-kari/Aki

Kagu-yama-e / haza-no komiti-no / tuduki keri

To Kaguyama
the rice-rack path
continued keri

Stalks of bamboo are tied to make a tall rack on which the cut rice plants dry out before the threshing. Kagu-yama is a mountain in Nara Prefecture, said to have gotten its name because a God left some perfumed garments to dry on it. This ku is a play on the well known poem by the Empress Zitoo in the Hundred Poems Collection:

春過 びて 夏 きに けらし 白 妙の
衣 ほす てふ 天 の 香 久 山

Spring is past/ Summer seems to have come;/
pure white/ garments are hung to dry on/
Heaven's Perfume-for-long Mountain. The
difference between the poem and the ku lies
in what is drying.

柚
 の
 香
 り
 茸
 の
 香
 り
 や
 今
 年
 酒
 苔
 泉

Taisen' Kotosi-zake[*Sin'syul*]/Aki

Yu-no kaori / take-no kaori ya / kotosi-zake

Yuzu perfume,
 mushroom perfume ya
 This year's sake.

This year's rice wine, also called new sake, is that which is made from the new rice harvest. Immediately after the harvest, farmers' households would brew new wine from the rice. Now, when all sake is made commercially, the new sake is not to be had earlier than February. Yuzu is a fragrant citron, considered to be one of the specially Japanese seasonings. The fruit is green, though by late Autumn it yellows. In this ku there are three fruits of the Autumn.

朝露
草に沈み
鳴子縄
鯨波

Keiha Naruko-nawa[Naruko]/Aki

Asa-tuyu ya / kusa-ni sidumeru / naruko-nawa

Morning dew ya
Into the grass has sunk
the bird-clapper rope.

The dew has settled on the clapper's
rope, and caused it to sink down with the
weight.

虫
賣
を
見
ず
夜
寒
そ
な
り
に
け
り
た
け
し

Takesi Yo-samu/Aki

Musi-uri-wo / mi-zaru yo-samu-to / nari-ni keri

The insect seller
not to be found; cold nights
have come keri

As the Japanese are fond of keeping Autumn singing insects in their homes to enjoy their varying songs, the peddler of insects is an interesting manifestation of Autumn. The bell insect, the pine tree insect, crickets, and so on can be bought in small cages. As it gets colder in late Autumn, the insects die off and the insect seller vanishes, too.

奏風
 枯木にけり
 草の如くに
 蟬

Soohuu Tooroo[Kamakiri]/Aki

Tooroo-mo / kusa-no gotoku-ni / kare-ni keri

The mantises too,
 just like the grasses,
 have withered keri

Even in death the mantis blends into his surroundings. In life it permits him to wait for his prey unobserved. Mantises are the only carnivorous members of the cricket family and never, if they can help it, stop eating. All that effort makes his withered end rather pathetic.

すり
 落
 ち
 瓦
 の
 敷
 け
 破
 れ
 芭
 蕉
 去
 秋

Keisyun Yare-basyoo/Aki

Zuri-oti-si / kawara-no kazu ya / yare-basyoo

Got loose and fell off,
 a number of roof tiles ya
 Torn banana leaves.

The roof will be repaired, but the
 banana leaves will only wither in their
 ragged shape. Unnamed but present is the
 November gale.

秋
 山子骨
 一束
 訂草

Teisoo Yuku aki/Aki

Yuku aki ya / kakasi-no hone-no / hito-tabane

Autumn departs ya
 Of scarecrow bones,
 one bundle.

The bones of a scarecrow--the mere frame
 of course, but to call it bones presumes
 that the scarecrow was a living thing. The
 Buddhist saying that even stones become
 Buddhas in this way pervaded ordinary life
 and thought even to early in this century.

蔵窓に
 俵
 の見えて
 冬隣
 境寿

Kyoozyu Huyu-donari/Aki

Kura-mado-ni / tawara-no mie-te / huyu-donari

In the storehouse window

bales can be seen.

Winter is next-door.

The kigo "next-door to Winter" is an expression full of *hai*, that gives life to the non-sentient concept of Winter.



月
 夜
 々
 に

 白
 き
 ま
 さ
 り
 の
 声

 千
 鳥
 の
 声

 酒
 蝶

Syatyoo

Tidori/Huyu

Tuki yo-yo-ni / sirosa masari-nu / tidori naku

The moon night by night
 gets a stronger whiteness;
 plovers cry.

Living by the sea in Winter, the sound
 of plovers crying night after night is
 melancholy, and in poetry this feeling is
 played upon. In haiku however, as in this
 ku, the polarity of forces (the lustrous
 whiteness of the moon and the desolate cry of
 the dark plovers) creates the hai that goes
 beyond melancholy.

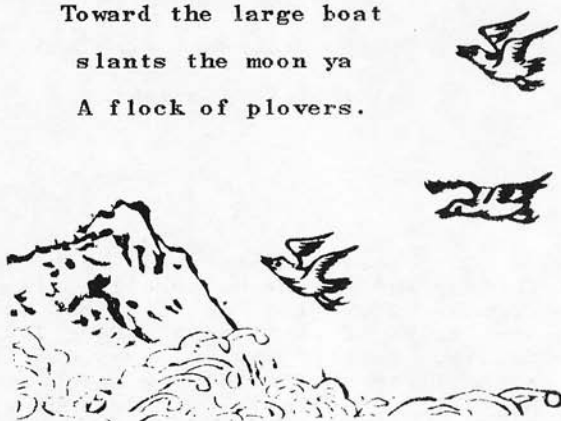
大船に
 いたふし月へ
 むら千鳥
 紅山

Koozan'

Mura-tidori[Tidori]/Huyu

Daisen'-ni / katabuku tuki ya / mura-tidori

Toward the large boat
 slants the moon ya
 A flock of plovers.



炉開
 柴に焚き
 添ふ
 木葉屑
 利葉

Riyoo

Ro-biraki/Huyu

Ro-biraki ya / siba-ni taki-sou / konoha-kudu

Open the hearth ya

To the brushwood fire add

bits of fallen leaves.

An occasion observed both in the tea ceremony and in the household. In the tea ceremony, on the Boar day that fell in the first third of the lunar 10th Month, the standing hearth was put away and the hearth in the floor of the tearoom was opened. In this ku, however, it is just a mountain house's hearth, and the rubbish of dried leaves being fed, instead of the perfectly shaped pieces of charcoal of the tea ceremony.

登
保
瑠

灯
の
よ
も
ろ

話
な
か
ば
に

短
日
や

Toohoru

Tan'zitu/Huyu

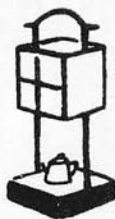
Tan'zitu ya / hanasi nakaba-ni / hi-no tomoru

Short day ya

Midway in conversation,

the lights put on.

Someone came to call in the afternoon,
and already it has started to dusk.



葉牡丹に
 短き旅の
 たより書く
 澄子

Sumidyo

Ha-botan'/Huyu

Ha-botan'-ni / midikaki tabi-no / tayori kaku

Among leaf peonies,
 a short journey's
 letter I write.

Actually this plant is of the cabbage family, though not edible. It is called peony because its leaves are a light purple and shape out into a peony shape. It grows 30-60 cm in height and is often potted or used in flower arrangements.

僧起きて
 狸こひきる
 小夜時の雨
 梨雲

Riun' Sayo-sigure[Signature]/Huyu

Soo oki-te / tanuki sikaru ya / sayo-sigure

The monk gets up from bed
 to scold the badger ya
 Late night icy rain.

Probably a badger he keeps in a cage,
 that's started complaining about the weather.

長雨の
庭に
落葉かな
莊村

Syooson'

Oti-ba/Huyu

Naga-ame-no / niwa-wo nagaruru / oti-ba kana

Through a long rain's
garden flow
fallen leaves kana



山茶花の
 実
 に
 日
 の
 当
 る
 小鳥かな
 石
 苔

Sekisyoo

Sazan'ka/Huyu

Sazan'ka-no / mi-ni hi-no ataru / ko-tori kana

On the mountain camellia

berries, the sunlight;

little birds kana

Sazan'ka: of the camellia family, it grows wild in the mountains; the tree can be up to five meters high. The flowers are light pink, smaller than camellias, with petals that are thinner and more fragile. Oil for cosmetic use is extracted from the berries.

額 密
 あ 談
 む に
 る
 火鉢 華村
 ひばち

Kason'

Hibati/Huyu

Mitudan'-ni / hitai atumuru / hibati kana

In secret conversation
 the foreheads come together,

hibachi kana

The hibati, a charcoal brazier, was one of the principal sources of heat in the Japanese house, but one had to sit right by it to feel any warmth. This is an amusing ku that reminds us of the ways of the world.

高山の
 あふれ粉雪
 今朝の冬
 豊水

Hoosui Kesa-no huyu[Ritttoo]/Huyu

Koozan'-no / ahure-ko-yuki ya / kesa-no huyu

The high mountain's
 over-brim of powdery snow ya
 This morning is Winter.

The center line's "ahure", "overflow",
 is a bit poetic perhaps, but the sound is
 chilling and gives a Winter-like feeling to
 this ku.

金堂
落葉、
薄、
日、
露、
鳴

Rome i Oti-ba/Huyu

Kon'doo-ni / oti-ba-no niou / usu-bi kana

By the Golden Hall
fallen leaves' perfume;
thin sunlight kana

The Golden Hall is the principal building of a Buddhist temple, where the main image is kept. It was so named because it was adorned with gold leaf.

玄関に
降りて消ゆる
粉雪かな
市平

Sihei

Ko-yuki[Yuki]/Huyu

Gen'kan'-ni / huri-tutu kiyuru / ko-yuki kana

Into the genkan,
as it falls it vanishes,
powdery snow kana

The vestibule (gen'kan') to a Japanese house, usually has an earthen or stone floor so no one gets excited about a little snow blowing in.

南
但
史

Nan'tan'si

相
対
す

Huyu-no yama/Huyu

山
と
河
が
対
面
す

Huyu-no yama / kawa-wo hedate-te / aitai-su

Winter mountains,
with a river between them,
face to face.



雪折々
 竹に日あり
 やぶ雀
 誠庵

Seian' Yuki-ore/Huyu

Yuki-ore-no / take-ni hi-no ari / yabu-suzume

On the snow-bent
 bamboo is the sun,
 grove sparrows.

When soft but heavy snow falls steadily,
 some boughs of trees that keep their leaves
 through the Winter, often bend and break
 under the weight, and this is called
 yuki-ore.

精華

Seika

氷
り
け

Kotatu/Huyu

障
子
の
す
き
を

炬
燵
か
ら

Kotatu-kara / syoozi-no suki-wo / sikari keri

From the kotatsu,
that the door's left open a crack,
scolded keri

With sliding paper doors, it is often the case that they do not get exactly closed, and of course a draft is caused thereby. Someone is sitting at the kotatu (quilted foot warmer) and feels the draft, and scolds whoever it was that went through the door last.

大 鍋 煮 魚
 魚 子 湯
 煮 魚
 魚 子

Kyosi Hugu-wo niru[Hugu-ziru]/Huyu

Ooi-naru / nabe-no soko-ni hugu-wo / ni-tutu ari

In an enormous
 pot, a globefish is
 being stewed.

Globefish, which contains poison in the ovary and liver, is known to have a wonderfully delicate flavour and to have taken the lives of many people fond of it.

There are many restaurants that specialize in this delicacy. In old haikai, we find many ku that speak of finding oneself alive the day after eating globefish stew. This ku, however, is droll because the person has no doubt cleaned the fish himself, is cooking it himself, and tells about it as though a witch is concocting a brew. (Stewed with chrysanthemum coronarium, mushrooms and beancurd cakes, this is a wonderful dish.)

松吹雪
つらさをふらす
天気かな
月山

Gessan' Turara/Huyu

Matu hui-te / turara-wo hurasu / ten'ki kana

The pine tree blown on,
its icicles rain down,
this weather kana

In cold weather after rain, each pine
needle is apt to have its separate icicle,
and a strong sudden wind will bring them down
like hail.

宵なごら
 さびしき
 雪達磨
 黒洲

Kokusyuu

Yuki-daruma/Huyu

Yoi-nagara / sabisiki mati ya / yuki-daruma

While yet early evening
 deserted, the village ya
 Snow Daruma.

The Japanese snow man is made in the egg shape prominent in all depictions of the Zen patriarch Bodhidharma, wrapped as he is from head to toe in his monk's garment. The feel of a snowy country evening comes out strongly and the snow Daruma is well pleased to be left to his meditations.

鍋
汁
か
ら
や
冬
籠
は
な
女

Hagidyo

Huyu-gomori/Huyu

Nabe-ziru-no / kuri-kosi-gati ya / huyu-gomori

The soup in the pot,
every day's carried over to the next ya
Winter seclusion.

Living alone, one never finishes all of
it. The Japanese usually make a soup of
beancurd paste for breakfast.

雪 静
 かな 宵
 光 星
 汁

Koosei Kabura-ziru/Huyu

Yuki hure-ba / siduka-na yoi-zo / kabura-ziru

When snow falls
 how quiet the night is,
 turnip soup.

Turnips sliced into stock and soybean
 paste makes this simple but warming soup,
 related to Buson' as his name was "Turnip
 Village". It is a dish, like hurohuki,
 that was favoured by haizin', being a
 natural thing of the season.

蓮の茎
折れ小す池の
厚氷
翠雨

Suin Atu-goori[Koori]/Huyu

Hasu-no kuki / ore-husu ike-no / atu-goori

The lotus stalks
lie bent over, the pond's
thick ice.

The lotus stalks that once had life are
reduced to bones, as the cycle of the year
turns to the time when ice flourishes.

う た 嫁
に き 取
ん
ん
江 家 へ
石 家 に

Teiseki

Yuki/Hayu

Yome-dori-no / uta nigiyaka-ni / yuki-no ie

The bridal feast
songs' spiritedness;
house in the snow.

Classically the season for weddings in Japan was Winter. Yome-dori means literally, taking a bride. The sound of the singing over the silent and sound-muffling snow comes out in an interesting way.

家洗ふ
さう大雨
春隣
白茅

Hakuga

Haru-tonari[Haru tikasi]/Huyu

Ie arau / sama-no dai-u ya / haru-tonari

It washes the house,
this kind of heavy rain ya
Spring is near.



右肩
 煤掃
 多聞天
 推震

Tuika Susu-haki/Huyu

On'-kata-ni / susu-haki-no iru / Tamon'ten'

By his honourable shoulder
 there is a soot cleaner,
 Vaisravana.

Vaisravana: one of the four celestial Guardian Kings; he rules in the Northern direction. He is usually depicted trampling on two demons, holding in his left hand a stupa, in the right a jewelled staff. Hai is present in the accident of circumstances, and this type of ku just plainly puts it down.

化粧
 除夜の炬燵に
 ア
 に
 芳葉

Yooyoo

Dyoya/Huyu

Kesyoo si-te / dyoya-no kotatu-ni / iri-ni keri

Carefully made up,
 into the Year Night's kotatsu
 entered keri

The Japanese family often celebrated New Year's eve sitting around a kotatu, a charcoal brazier under a table covered with a quilted spread that keeps one warm if one sits with legs under it. To "enter" a kotatu means to put one's hands and legs under the quilt. The structure of this ku is like the last sentence at the end of a Joruri puppet play, done in grand style with the samisen, telling of some great historical figure's actions. To use that grandeur to tell about putting on make-up and sitting in the kotatu, gives this ku drollity and hai.

